GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6192
ANSWERED ON:11.04.2017
Animal Census
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry had conducted any animal census in the country and if so, the details thereof, animal-wise;
(b) the details of the criteria adopted by the Government for conducting the animal census;
(c) the manner in which the population of wild animals is estimated in the absence of specific census data;
(d) the details of the estimated wild animals of iconic species in the country, State/animal-wise; and
(e) the details of the steps taken by the Government to conserve the wild animals of iconic species in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a) Census of major flagship species is undertaken at the State-level by the respective State/Union Territory Governments periodically. However census of tiger and elephant is undertaken at the national level once every four and five years respectively. Estimated population of tigers, elephants, rhino and lions, as available with the Ministry is given below:

Name of species Estimated Population/year
Tiger 2226 (2014)
Elephant 29391-30711 (2012
Rhinoceros 2913 (2015)
Lion 523 (2015)

(b) & (c) Main criteria adopted by the Government for conducting the animal census are as follows:
1. For tigers and nocturnal animals modern camera trap based capture- recapture method is used.
2. For diurnal species line transects, block count, total count and census at water holes are used.
3. For other species synchronized counting all over the state using frontline staff and volunteers are used.
4. For elephant and rhinoceros dung decay method.

The method used by Wildlife Institution of India (WII)-National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is a double sampling approach where in Spatially explicit capture mark recapture using camera traps is used for assessing tiger and other carnivores populations across 18 states in a joint likelihood framework. Prey populations are assessed using Distance sampling in all Tiger reserves. Lion population is censused by total count and elephant population by dung density and decay method.

(d) State-wise details of the estimated wild animals of iconic species in the country is given in the Annexure-IA, IB and IC.

(e) Steps taken to conserve the endangered species of birds and animals include:

i. Legal protection has been provided to wild animals against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

ii. Protected Areas, viz., National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves covering important wildlife habitats have been created all over the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve wild animals and their habitats.

iii. Special programmes like 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' have been launched for conservation of these endangered species and their habitats.

iv. A specific component of "Recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats' is provided in the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' for focused conservation action on selected critically endangered species.

v. In addition to provision of stringent punishment for the offenders, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence(s).

vi. Financial and technical assistance is provided to the State/ Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes for providing better protection to wildlife including endangered species and improvement of its habitat.

vii. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.

viii. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to ensure co-ordination among various officers and State Governments in connection with the enforcement of law for control of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

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